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D I A L O G U E

IN THE

ELYSIAN FIELDS.

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D I A L O G U E

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ELYSIAN FIELDS,

BETWEEN

CÆSAR AND CATO.

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By ELIZA RYVES,

AUTHOR OF "AN ODE TO MR. MASON," AND "AN EPISTLE TO  
LORD JOHN CAVENDISH."

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D I A L O G U E

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1851



T O  
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES, &c. &c. &c. &c.

THIS  
D I A L O G U E  
IS HUMBL Y INSCRIBED,  
BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S  
MOST OBEDIENT  
HUMBLE SERVANT,

ELIZA RYVES.



**T**HE hint of the following Dialogue, and of some others which are preparing for the Press, was suggested by FENELON'S Dialogues des Morts. The Argument and Characters of the one now published, are borrowed from the thirty-ninth Dialogue of that Author, but the Dialogue itself is neither a translation or imitation of his work.



## A R G U M E N T.

“ Le pouvoir despotique et tyrannique loin d'affurer le repos et

“ l'autorité des Princes les rend au contraire malheureux, et en-

“ traîne inévitablement leur ruine.”

FENELON'S DIALOGUES.

Despotic and tyrannical power is so far from securing the peace and authority of Princes, that, on the contrary, it makes them wretched, and draws inevitable destruction on them.

D I A L O G U E

IN THE

E L Y S I A N F I E L D S.

---

C A T O   A N D   C Æ S A R.

'T WAS that calm hour when twilight's shadowy reign  
In soften'd beauty shews the flow'ry plain;

When Zephyrs bland the cooling gales diffuse,  
And from their pinions shed ambrosial dews;

That CATO's shade, majestic as the God

5

Who awes immortal synods with a nod,

B

From

From bright Elyfium's focial bowers withdrew,  
 Alone the philosophick Mufe to woo,  
 And, wrapt in thought, indulge without control  
 Each deep refearch of his inquiring foul. 10  
 Robes of effulgent white his limbs enfold,  
 With purple edg'd, and intermingling gold;  
 Like the rich drapery of the western fkies,  
 When fleecy clouds round fetting funs arife,  
 And catch from ev'ry beam a thoufand glorious dies: 15  
 The \* trabea's form they bore, and proudly round  
 Devolv'd the floating folds along the ground.  
 A wreath of amaranth, with oak combin'd,  
 Around his brow its glowing flowers entwin'd;

\* The Trabea was a Roman robe, peculiar to perfons of diftinction;  
 it was commonly white, bordered with purple.

And



And weeping odours, which profusely shed 20  
 Adown the silver honours of his head,  
 Wide o'er the waving robe rich tears of fragrance spread.)

Onward he mov'd to where her fullen tide  
 In groves of cypress Lethe seeks to hide,  
 And murmuring back Ambition's angry groan, 25  
 Envy's deep sigh, and Love's complaining moan,  
 Mocks the sad throng, who o'er her margin bend,  
 Nor to their woes one healing draught will lend.

Across the narrowing stream, as CATO's eye  
 Mark'd the pale train, nor mark'd without a sigh, 30  
 The shade of \* JULIUS rushing on his view,  
 Swift to the utmost verge of Lethe flew,

\* JULIUS CÆSAR.

And fain had plung'd beneath the parting wave,  
 But fate forbad his daring limbs to lave,  
 Or with a tyrant's unrepented crimes, 35  
 Taint the pure ether of Elyfian climes.

" 'Tis CATO's self—his form—his godlike mien,  
 As MARS determin'd, and as JOVE serene!"  
 Exclaim'd th' astonish'd Ghost: " that robe he wears,  
 And garland of immortal oak, declares 40  
 The stubborn patriot, who disdain'd to live  
 On any terms that CÆSAR's power cou'd give."

With looks of mild benignity, like those  
 Which Mercy, check'd by stricter Justice, shows,  
 When bending o'er some wretch, whose impious deeds 45  
 Oppose the grace for which he vainly pleads,

Great

Great CATO turn'd, and to the guilty shade

Thus the soft tribute of compassion paid :

“ Ill fated Ghost ! since Death's avenging spear

Has stopt thy vices in their mad career ; 50

Since Rome from thee no future ills can know,

CATO's no longer fallen CÆSAR's foe :

But wou'd those waves, whose droufy currents glide,

With lingering pace, our spirits to divide,

Back roll their stream, my former wrongs effac'd, 55

I'd soothe thy sorrows in mine arms embrac'd ;

For well my soul each tender feeling knows,

Which to a Roman's griefs a Roman owes.”

“ Proud shade,” exclaim'd th' indignant Ghost again,

“ Take back th' insulting pity I disdain ; 60

Fall'n



Fall'n tho' I am by murder's treacherous steel,  
 Think not my godlike soul debas'd I feel ;  
 CÆSAR is CÆSAR, tho' from empire hurl'd,  
 Great as when thron'd the master of the world !  
 Oh glorious name ! my glowing spirit towers, 65  
 When memory brings again those golden hours,  
 Which saw me like th' undaunted eagle soar,  
 To heights of radiant fame untrack'd before ;  
 Saw me o'er empires stretch my sceptred hand,  
 And round my throne dependant Monarchs stand. 70

Nor canst thou, CATO, rigid as thou art,  
 If candour guide thee, blame the aspiring part,  
 Which CÆSAR chose, since Rome's consenting voice,  
 That CÆSAR hail'd the Emperor of her choice.

“ Great

[ 7 ]

- “ Great as thou art (they cried) to glory born, 75  
 “ The humbler fortunes of thy fathers scorn ;  
 “ A throne for thee the favouring powers ordain,  
 “ An empire worthy J O V E’s immortal reign ;  
 “ Seize then the blessing, and, with sails unfurl’d,  
 “ Launch forth at once the sovereign of the world ; 80  
 “ O’er Rome, and Rome’s proud lords, extend thy sway,  
 “ And bow by force of arms her senate to obey.”

Smiling calm scorn on CÆSAR’S vaunting pride,  
 Thus to his vain appeal the sage reply’d :  
 “ How weak that judgment which decides on fame 85  
 By the low rabble’s censure or acclame !  
 An impious herd, unprincipled and bold,  
 The tools of faction, and the slaves of gold,

“ Stand

Stand ever prompt at mad Ambition's call,

Alike to pour their venal praise on all ;

90

With throats of brass to thunder forth the deeds

Of each proud consul who for triumphs pleads ;

Who their base suffrage (still by gifts obtain'd)

Bribes with the wealth from plunder'd nations drain'd.

And from the hackney'd bursts of such applause,

95

Draw'st thou a sanction, JULIUS, to thy cause ?

Oh lost to shame, to truth, to honour lost,

Who glorying thus in infamy, can boast

The triumph of his guilt!—say, in the throng

Who roar'd thy praise in their intemperate song,

100

And like wild Bacchants in their orgies lewd,

With drunken riot sober sense subdued,

Join'd there one citizen whose generous soul

Breath'd its free thoughts disdainful of control ;

Spoke



Spoke there one man, but those by interest led, 105

Of fame regardless, and to virtue dead?—

No, 'twas a hireling tribe by gold secur'd,

Practic'd in lies, to ev'ry crime enur'd;

Who for a largess more profuse than thine

Had heap'd their incense on thy rivals' shrine; 110

And spurning thee, in torrents from their tongues

Pour'd each vile insult that to guilt belongs.

Such were the rout, whose turbulent acclame

Insulted reason with their CÆSAR'S name:

Led on by orators more base than they, 115

Who glaz'd oppression for a client's pay,

And soft as music breath'd their flattery round,

In pomp of thought, and harmony of sound.

Ver. 115, *Led on by orators, &c.*] This chiefly alludes to some of  
CICERO'S orations, particularly to the one for LIGARIUS.

Thro' each fam'd portico, each reverend fane,  
 Wide spread the miscreant croud in CÆSAR's train; 120  
 With peals of uproar made the roofs rebound,  
 With golden diadems his statues crown'd,  
 The way preparing for a bolder deed,  
 At Lupercal's wild revels to succeed;  
 And step by step as daringly he trod, 125  
 Worship'd the proud usurper as a God.

"Hence," cried the conscious shade "th' ungrateful theme  
 Harrows my soul like some guilt-haunting dream :

Ver. 122, *With golden diadems, &c.*] CÆSAR's displacing the Tribunes, who opposed his partizans while they were crowning his statues with diadems, was one of the first things that gave umbrage to the people of Rome, who began to suspect his real intentions. This happened but a short time before the feast of the Lupercalia, when, CÆSAR being seated on a chair of gold, in all his triumphal ornaments, ANTHONY presented him with a crown, which CÆSAR put back with his hand, but not without marks of reluctance, which betrayed how much he wished to wear it.

Hence,

Hence, left my rage to frantic madness grow,

Urg'd by the taunts of a triumphant foe;—

130

For such I deem thee, CATO, since of all

Who swell'd the carnage round Dyrrachium's wall,

*All* ~~Who~~ at Pharfalia <sup>all at</sup> ~~fell~~, or Tapsus slain,  
*Say all who fell on Munda's well fought plain*  
~~Do glutted Munda's well disputed plain,~~

Thou, thou alone <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ he, whose fame ~~posset~~ <sup>repreat</sup> 135

*The glowing joys of victory in my breast*  
~~With envy's rankling venom cancer'd breast.~~

Each waking thought, each midnight dream display'd

A rival crown'd in thy exulting shade ;

And CATO gone, whose soul I fought to bend

By generous friendship to become my friend,

140

Ver. 134, *Or glutted Munda's, &c.*] CÆSAR was wont to say, that at all other places he had fought for glory, but at Munda for his life. Thirty thousand of the enemy were killed on the spot.

Ver. 135, *Thou, thou alone, &c.*] When CÆSAR was informed of the death of CATO, he said, "CATO envied me the glory of saving his life, and therefore do I envy his death."



Cold seem'd the praise of my sublime renown,  
And dull the beams of glory round my crown.

“ Deluded Ghost ! ” the reverend fire return'd,  
“ Deem not that meteor blaze, which round thee burn'd,  
The beams of genuine Glory ; she displays 145  
On Virtue's brow alone her steady rays ;  
Nor shall the Monarch who o'er millions reigns,  
Nor shall the Chief who leads mankind in chains,  
With regal crowns, or spoils of war, presume  
To twine her wreaths around his trophied tomb ; 150  
Unless above his fame his virtues rise,  
And gain from Heaven's award th' immortal prize.

For thee ! tho' dreaded as some hostile God,  
Rome's coward sons stood trembling at thy nod ;

With

With stifled hatred every heart was fill'd, 155

With thirst of vengeance every bosom thrill'd ;

Tho', aw'd by fear, the prostituted knee

Reluctant paid imperial rites to thee.

But when in dust their tyrant low was laid,

Fierce glow'd their rage to execrate thy shade ; 160

Tho' vain OCTAVIUS on thy impious shrine,

The Gods insulting, hail'd that shade divine.

Not so the heroes who for freedom bled,

Tho' no proud column rears its stately head,

In bold relief their godlike deeds to show, 165

Still at their names each Roman breast shall glow,

Each grave historian, glorying in the theme,

To distant ages bid their virtues beam ;

Each



Each serious Muse their deathless fame rehearse,  
 And sing their praises in immortal verse; 170  
 While matrons to their babes, in grateful pride,  
 Declare how CATO, and how BRUTUS died;  
 Bursting from chains, to liberty they 'rose,  
 And mock'd the power they cou'd no more oppose.

Yes, JULIUS, know of all the patriot band, 175  
 Who rais'd against thy crimes th' avenging hand,  
 Who stain'd the senate with a Consul's gore,  
 And from the Gods their proper victim tore,  
 Those righteous Gods on BRUTUS smile applause;  
 Whose zeal, if rash, was zeal in freedom's cause; 180

Ver. 177, *Who stain'd the senate with a Consul's gore,*] JULIUS CÆSAR  
 was consul at time he was killed.

Who



Who nobly struck on virtue's public plan,  
And slew the tyrant, tho' he lov'd the man."

Thus, sternly solemn, CATO spoke, and now  
The storm that long had lower'd on CÆSAR'S brow,  
A threat'ning gloom o'er each dark feature spread, 185  
And ting'd his eye-balls with a fiercer red ;  
At length, with rage redoubled by delay,  
The kindling fires in thunder burst their way.

" Oh mark it, MINOS, from thy throne sublime,  
Just MINOS mark," he cried, " the opprobrious crime ! 190  
Hear how thy CATO, fam'd for truth, descends,  
And falsehoods with his base invectives blends :  
Hear him the laws of earth and heaven despise,  
Tear from the heroes urn his dearest prize,

No

No honours but to factious guilt allow, 195

And bind the laurel on the murderer's brow !

Ye too, immortal powers, whose sacred names

'The bold blasphemer thus with lies defames,

Where sleep your thunders ! will the world revere

Gods who such insults unaveng'd can hear ? 200

But thank, proud railer, thank those waves that roll,

To guard from CÆSAR'S rage thy coward soul ;

Thank the base murderer's hand, that hurl'd me down

Bare and unarm'd in this vile consul's gown ;

Else, dreadful with my jav'lin as above, 205

When o'er the Lybian wilds thy host I drove,

To Stygian glooms thy shivering ghost I'd send,

Tho' MINOS rose his CATO to defend.

But

But go, with ZENO, in Elyfian fchools  
 Preach the cold wifdom of thy ftoick rules, 210  
 Thy fubtile fophifms, arrogantly vain,  
 Falfc as the ravings of a madman's brain ;  
 And to the fhades who round thee lift'ning glide,  
 Dictate thy dogmas with a pedant's pride :  
 Or if beneath that mask of dull repofe 215  
 The lurking flame of bold fedition glows,  
 To MINOS hafte, and ripe for faction ftill,  
 Bid him revoke the fates recorded will ;  
 That back to earth in fome fierce fury's form,  
 Or hurl'd a thunderbolt amidft the ftorm, 220

Ver. 204, *When e'er the Lybian wilds, &c.*] This alludes to the march  
 of CATO and his army over the deferts of Lybia or Africa to the kingdom  
 of Mauritania, after the fatal battle of Pharfalia.



Swift to AUGUSTUS thou may'st wing thy flight,  
 And dash him down from empire's envied height,  
 That CATO, as a God, may reign alone,  
 And Rome for him her guardian JOVE dethrone."

"Think not," the sage return'd, "Rome's sons require 225  
 Furies, or thunderbolts, in storms of fire,  
 To lead them on, and great attempts inspire;  
 Nor shall her slumbering virtue long remain  
 Oppress'd, and bound in fear's lethargic chain;  
 Unless her crimes, mature for vengeance, rise, 230  
 And draw the curse of slavery from the skies:  
 But rather let offended Heaven unbind  
 The plagues of Athens to the driving wind;  
 Till every gale, with hot contagion fraught,  
 Taint the parch'd vitals with the fiery draught; 235

Let

Let tempests fierce in wild confusion hurl'd,  
 Shake the foundations of the heaving world,  
 And desolation sweep with rapid wing  
 The hopes of harvest, and the blooms of spring;  
 E'er Rome's free genius, by oppression broke, 240  
 Bow the tame neck to the Cæfarean yoke.

No, fallen, degenerate, servile as she seems,  
 Yet in her senate glow some radiant beams  
 Of liberty's immortal fires, yet runs  
 The blood of patriots in those patriots sons, 245  
 And trust me, JULIUS, shou'd the Gods decree  
 Those heirs of freedom now no longer free,  
 With steady zeal, <sup>by</sup> ~~that~~ danger ~~can't subdue~~ <sup>unsubdued</sup>,  
 The glorious contest still shall <sup>be</sup> ~~they~~ renew,



Till none but nature's abject dross survives, 250  
 To swell a tyrant's train in slavery's galling gyves.

Nor shall the line of despots, who presume  
 To wield the fasces o'er degraded Rome,  
 Triumphant in their tyranny remain,  
 To close in peace a long-extended reign ; 255  
 But victims to th' infernal powers decreed,  
 By treachery perish, or rebellion bleed,  
 Nor find one friend 'mong all their subject slaves  
 To drop a tear on their inglorious graves :  
 For still on impious thrones this curse attends, 260  
 Their miseries heighten as their power extends,  
 And fear, pale fear, in every look confest,  
 Who reigns the tyrant of the tyrant's breast,

From



From step to step its wretched victim leads,  
 Till every thought on fell suspicion feeds ;— 265  
 In every smile he fancies treason plan'd—  
 He sees a dagger grasp'd in every hand ;—  
 Then, with ingratitude (the tyrant's crime),  
 The tools who rais'd him to those heights sublime,  
 Who quench'd for him celestial freedom's fire, 270  
 Dooms the first victims to his jealous ire ;  
 And torn with tortures worse than hell ordains,  
 Slow lingering on in self-inflicted pains,  
 The slave of fear, o'er slavish millions reigns. }

Not so the patriot Prince, whose soul pursues 275  
 By virtuous means a Monarch's noblest views,  
 Who, born to rule, the sceptre justly guides,  
 And tempers freedom's too licentious tides,

By

By the mild check of legal power alone,  
 Nor seeks, nor wishes for a despot's throne; 280  
 Bright shines the morn of his resplendent days,  
 Bright the full glory of his noon-tide blaze,  
 And bright the beams of his declining rays.  
 Blest in himself, and in his people blest,  
 With no vain pomp, no hireling guards oppress, 285  
 Fearless of ill, in confidence he walks,  
 Nor dreams of treason, that round tyrants stalks.  
 And 'midst his senate, when, in royal state,  
 He fits the auditor of free debate,  
 Candid he listens, nor with coward fear 290  
 To each dissentient turns a jealous ear,  
 But forms his judgment on this generous plan,  
*To speak with freedom is the right of man.*

In peace and honour thus serenely roll  
 His glorious days to life's extremest goal, 295  
 And when, mature in years, mature in fame,  
 To some bright offspring, worthy of his name,  
 The regal throne he leaves, embalm'd in tears  
 Of grief unfeign'd the reverend corse appears;  
 Friends, children, subjects, mingling sighs with sighs, 300  
 While each in energy of sorrow vies,  
 And round his ashes as the palm they bind,  
 Bewail the FRIEND—the FATHER of mankind.

F I N I S.



In peace and honour thus gently roll

His glorious days to life's extremest goal,

And when, mature in years, mature in fame,

To some bright offspring, worthy of his name,

The regal throne he leaves, smiling in tears,

Of grief unfeign'd the reverend countenance

Friends, children, lifting high with right good

While each in energy of sorrow vies,

And round his ashes as the pains they feel

Tell all the world—the pattern of mankind.